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DE RUEHIN #1463 1780722
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 270722Z JUN 07
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5816
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6973
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 1202
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1981
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 5949
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0375
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 8227

UNCLAS TAIPEI 001463

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DEPT FOR AIT/W, EAP/TC, INR/EAP

FROM AIT KAOHSIUNG BRANCH OFFICE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Disarray in Kaohsiung Organizing Committee May Cause IWGA to Reconsider 2009 World Games Location

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: AIT/K has learned that differences within the DPP led to the resignation in May of World Games Kaohsiung Organizing Committee (KOC) chairperson Chen I-Hung. Chen was replaced briefly by Kaohsiung City Government Deputy Secretary General Emily Hsu, who was succeeded by former Olympic medalist Chi Cheng on June 25. The disarray in the KOC reportedly is sparking discussions in the International World Games Association (IWGA) about whether to pull the 2009 Games out of Kaohsiung. Meanwhile, Beijing has been pressing the IWGA to have the Games relocated to a city in mainland China, according to our contacts. One of the agenda items at an upcoming IWGA-KOC meeting in August is the possible relocation of the 2009 Games. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The resignation of World Games Kaohsiung Organizing Committee (KOC) Chairperson Chen I-hung was triggered by tensions within the DPP, a KOC contact recently told AIT/K. Chen I-hung, a supporter of presidential candidate Frank Hsieh, was forced to resign by aides of Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chu, a supporter of former Premier Su Tseng-chang, after he had repeatedly expressed frustration that Su's Executive Yuan was not providing the assistance and funds needed to move the Games forward. The IWGA, which had been under the impression that Chen was doing an excellent job, was shocked to hear the news of his ouster, our contact said.

¶3. (SBU) Emily Hsu, Chen I-Hung's brief replacement, found the organization in such disarray that she called for assistance from the Presidential Office, which sent an official to Kaohsiung to assess the situation. Subsequently, the KOC Board of Directors decided to appoint former Olympic medalist Chi Cheng to replace Hsu. The KOC Board also hired Victor Wang as Sports Director, a position that has been vacant since March 2007.

¶4. (SBU) AIT/K staff attended the high profile handover ceremony from Emily Hsu to Chi Cheng on June 25. In addition to Mayor Chen Chu, both Kaohsiung vice mayors, many city government bureau directors and city councilors participated in this ceremony, which was sponsored by the Mayor's office. The Mayor, Emily Hsu, and Chi Cheng all praised former chair Chen I-Hung's contribution to such a "fine organization," and promised a final concentrated "hard push, working together" for the dignity not just of Kaohsiung, but of Taiwan, to ensure the World Games 2009 would be a rousing success. Although the handover received a great deal of positive press attention, some locals at the event expressed concern that neither Chi nor Wang are native to Kaohsiung. Others doubted Chi's abilities since she has no municipal government experience and is also concurrently heading the Deaf Olympics.

15. (SBU) AIT/K's KOC contact, who is frustrated with factional politics and corruption in the organization, will also resign. Our contact reports that different bureaus in the KOC hire only favored contractors and money is often transferred to individual pockets. James Du, son of Education Minister Tu Cheng-sheng, is slated to replace our contact. Despite widespread complaints that Du often oversteps his bounds in his current job in the Kaohsiung Mayor's office, our contact notes that Du is eager to serve in the KOC.

16. (SBU) Meanwhile, our contacts tell us, the IWGA is discussing whether or not to pull the 2009 World Games out of Kaohsiung. The IWGA president has confided to AIT/K contacts that the disarray in the KOC is triggering second thoughts about whether to hold the World Games in Kaohsiung. According to our contacts, Beijing has been courting the IWGA for months in hopes of having the Games relocated to a city in mainland China. An upcoming meeting between the KOC and the IWGA in August will include an agenda item on whether the 2009 World Games should stay in Kaohsiung or be reassigned to another city.

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